

New Picture Takes Cooper Back to Cowhand Past

'Cowboy and the Lady,' at Palace, Only Mildly Diverting Comedy Romance, Despite Stars

By JAY CARMODY.

As a playwright, S. N. Behrman says nothing, or practically nothing, more beautifully than any other American dramatist. His prose makes such pleasant sound that every one forgets how much better it would be if it made more dramatic sense. That, to be sure, is a nasty thing to be thinking but when Mr. Behrman does not write with the proper inspiration for an actor like Gary Cooper, he is doing wrong by one of the screen's finest talents. And that is the way Mr. Behrman wrote in "The Cowboy and the Lady" which opened yesterday at Loew's Palace.

The lanky, laconic genius on the pay roll of Samuel Goldwyn, assisted by Merle Oberon and some competent subordinates, manage to make the comedy romance mildly diverting. But, as everyone knows, "mildly diverting" constitutes a critical cliché which should not have to be applied to a Cooper film bearing the hallmark of Samuel Goldwyn as producer. It may be unreasonable, but one expects more.

The picture takes Mr. Cooper back to the old cowhand groove from which he was snatched to stardom. He is a stalwart son of the range, a chap who has learned the facts of life so thoroughly that its fancy side does not appeal to him. He is so obviously a fellow of simplicity, sincerity, decency and sex appeal that when the society girl spots him, she has to let away her background to get his attention. Because he likes women who have the characteristics of work horses, the kind that will carry their share of the load, she tries to be like that. Miss Oberon's effort to live up to that ideal has its various humorous and poignant moments. None of them, however, are too, too emotionally moving.

The tender moments of the film, as well as those embracing some of its more delightful off-hand comedy are those which are left to the talents of Mr. Cooper. The talent that makes him the envy of such a splendid actor as Charles Laughton bobs up frequently in the action of "The Cowboy and the Lady." He does a fine job of being a cowboy, in a sombrero and chaps in a passage in which he is playing house, a bit of pantomime that covers such things as making love to his wife, pointing out to her the beauties of nature in Montana, and ending up, finally with a party for his fellow cowhands, all of whom are thoroughly convinced

that he is cracked. It is a whimsical touch that gives one a warm feeling toward the picture for a brief space.

Another good sequence is that in which Mr. Cooper, having been tricked into kissing the girl and never suspecting the treachery and coquetry, goes back to propose marriage. Because the logic of a kiss does not strike her quite the same way, Mr. Cooper picks her up and tosses her in the swimming pool. No other actor could be quite so off-hand when presented with the same opportunity.

H. C. Potter's direction in scenes like this has about it an expertness which is missing at other points along the route. It does things that it should not upon occasions to such people as Patsy Kelly (she's a sylph now), Walter Brennan and various other of the capable people who earned Goldwyn dollars on which to diet.

"The Cowboy and the Lady" is given the usual glossy Goldwyn production. Most of the background, which is a bit startling for a picture with such a title, is the rich girl's rich home in Palm Beach. It probably is a reflection of Mr. Behrman's (what's he doing here again?) penchant for drawing rooms. He, of course, never could be a fellow who would feel at home on the range.

The few cowboy country shots that do creep into the picture are very handsome things, and there are some reasonably exciting excerpts from rodeo performances, which also increase the sagebrush savor of the film.

"The Cowboy and the Lady" is vividly supplemented by a technicolor style show which ought to be a very captivating thing for women and very instructive for men who have been wondering what women are going to look like next.

Now a Mark Twain Hero



Slings a crooked pole over his shoulder and sneaks out to the old fishing hole. He is now engaged in re-creating for the screen Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn," in the M-G-M film version of the famed sequel to "Tom Sawyer."

Royal Title Means Nothing To an Assistant Director

In her native Sarawak, Princess Baba need not lift a finger. Surrounded by luxury and servants, her slightest wish is a command. In Hollywood, however, the princess not only can but does do a great deal for herself—during working hours. When the sun sinks behind the Hollywood hills she again ascends to the position she has known all her life. The film colony, having always looked with awe upon titled personages, entertains in regal style for Princess Baba.

Such treatment would be accorded her 24 hours a day if it weren't for the fact that she's ambitious for a screen career. That places her in a different category during working hours. Of course, she still is treated with the greatest respect. But assistant directors are a pretty hard-boiled lot who are paid to see that studio rules and regulations are carried out. And even a princess can't make them waver.

Consequently, now that she is working with W. C. Fields, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy in Universal's "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man," Princess Baba must adhere to the same rules as other actresses. If she has a 9 o'clock call, she must arise at 6 in order to dress, have breakfast and drive to the studio from her Santa Monica home by 7:30.

Immediate upon arriving at the studio, she reports to the makeup department where she punches a time clock. About 45 minutes are required to make her up. Then she spends another 45 minutes having her hair dressed. Again she punches a time clock so the studio has an accurate record of the time she spends getting ready for work. There's another time clock on the set which she must punch when she arrives and departs so there will be a record of how long she was actually on the set.

"I knew exactly what I would have to do before I signed the contract for this picture," the princess declares. "And it doesn't bother me a bit. I want a screen career more perfectly willing to work as hard or as long as necessary to have it."

"As far as I am concerned, I'd just as soon forget I am a princess and be regarded only as an actress. However, I have discovered that it's not easy to shake a title in Hollywood. People here are too title conscious. Perhaps though if I am good enough in 'You Can't Cheat an Honest Man' to establish myself somewhat as an actress, I can make people think of me only professionally."

According to advance reports emanating from the studio, it's very possible that the Princess may see her historic achievements overshadow her family inheritance.

Greta Garbo Wants a Change In Title of 'Ninotchka'

Says She Can't Pronounce It Herself; Friday the 13th Brings Stars' Superstitions to Fore

By SHEILAH GRAHAM.

HOLLYWOOD. Wallace Beery has invented a new lipstick holder for his wife—to keep the saive from getting "goosey." (A patent has been applied for.) Greta Garbo wants to change the title of "Ninotchka," her next picture. She says that even she can't pronounce it properly. . . . Tom Brown is acting as cupid for the estranged Betty Grable and Jackie Coogan. He hopes to have them living together before the end of the month. . . . Norma Shearer has received hundreds of unfriendly letters condemning her for receiving the torch from the late Irving Thalberg. Can she help being rich? And I wonder how many of those who demand she give the money to charity would do likewise if they were in Norma's position. It is always easy to give some one else's money away. . . . Most pathetic sight in Hollywood: Reginald Gardiner, with one hand in a sling, and carrying a torch for Hedy Lamarr with the other.

Black Friday has come to Hollywood—Friday, the 13th. And if you don't think the stars are more superstitious than you or I, here are just a few of the "illogical" actions indulged in by movieland's great ones. Priscilla Lane never sees a piece of string on the set without picking it up. Spencer Tracy believes that returning for forgotten objects brings bad luck. . . . Eleanor Powell does not mind walking under ladders, but will slay the person who whistles a single note in her dressing room. Frank Morgan refuses to say the last line of a radio play while rehearsing. He saves it for the actual show. (This is an old stage superstition.) . . . Carole Lombard's current good-luck charm is a round, smooth pebble given her by Clark Gable. . . . Bette Davis refuses to part with any coin that is nicked or bent. . . . Priscilla Lane thinks it is bad luck to step in chewing gum (so do I—for my shoes). . . . Irene Dunne will not have a picture on the wall of her dressing room. . . . Douglas Corrigan refuses to go anywhere without his "good luck" leather jacket.

David Niven, Donald Crisp and Basil Rathbone have formed a League for the Protection of Olivia De Havilland From Unfriendly Males. She told them about Howard Hughes and they said it was okay to go out with him. Mr. Hughes, by the way, has reached the point where he sends Olivia one dozen roses every other day. . . . The head man in Annabella's life is Gene Markey, and not Tyrone Power, with whom she must appear on publicity occasions, as per the instructions of her studio. . . . Robert Taylor has been informed by Metro that the latter will pay for all suits damaged during his current trip to New York. So, fans, get busy.

Which reminds me of strange autograph requests sometimes received by the stars. Bette Davis was recently asked to sign her name on two turtles, now swimming happily somewhere in North Dakota. Olivia De Havilland was asked to autograph a large silk pillow case by a wife who wrote that her husband suffered from insomnia, and

she was sure the proximity of Olivia's name would cure him! . . . Slight of the week. Cecil B. De Mille directing "Union Pacific" while lying flat on a stretcher, with two interns and two nurses (pretty) in attendance. . . . Nearby are a wheelchair and a couple of crutches. Outside is a de luxe ambulance. Is this a supercolossal De Mille production? Robert Montgomery was handed a script by a producer. "Well?" queried the latter after Bob had turned the last page. "What do you think of it?" "Do you really want me to tell you?" asked the actor. "Sure," replied Bob. "Any one connected with this picture—even remotely—should be taken out and shot." And he handed back the script.

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Where and When

Current Theater Attractions and Time of Showing

National—"Set to Music." Bea Lillie in a new musical comedy by Noel Coward: 8:30 p.m.

Palace—"The Cowboy and the Lady," romantic comedy with Merle Oberon and Gary Cooper: 12:05, 2:30, 4:50, 7:15 and 9:40 p.m.

Keith's—"Son of Frankenstein," in which the monster returns with more scary doings: 11:35 a.m., 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35 and 9:35 p.m.

Earle—"Say it in French," new romance in the comic mood: 11 a.m., 1:45, 4:30, 7:15 and 10:05 p.m. Stage shows: 12:45, 3:30, 6:20 and 9:05 p.m.

Capitol—"Artists and Models Abroad," Jack Benny's new adventure: 11 a.m., 1:40, 4:25, 7:10 and 9:55 p.m. Stage shows: 12:55, 3:40, 6:25 and 9:05 p.m.

Metropolitan—"Smashing the Spy Ring," the story of just that: 11:40 a.m., 1:40, 3:45, 5:50, 7:50 and 9:55 p.m.

Columbia—"Out West With the Hardys," latest tale of the doings of the popular family: 11:25 a.m., 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:40 and 9:45 p.m.

Little—"The Edge of the World," drama of a doomed people: 11 a.m., 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:45 and 9:55 p.m.

Belasco—"Grand Illusion," telling indictment of warfare: 4:15, 6:05, 8 and 9:50 p.m.

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Frankenstein Monster Is Off Again

Keith's New Film Has Plenty of Scary Doings

By HARRY MACARTHUR.

If you are possessed with a yen to have the daylight scared out of you, R-K-O Keith's is the place to satisfy it. "Son of Frankenstein" packs a goodly supply of chills and more than once last night brought frightened little squeals of half-embarrassed terror from inhabitants of the mezzanine. It does not seem to be quite the demon as was the "Frankenstein" of a few years back that inspired it, but "Son of Frankenstein" still is a scary enough item to appease all this appetite for horror that movie audiences have shown this season.

"Son of Frankenstein" is, strange as it may seem, the story of the son of the Baron Frankenstein who created the monster. From America come the son, his wife and their small son to move into the Frankenstein castle they have inherited. Exploring his laboratory the baron discovers he has inherited also the little playmate his father made up out of some spare parts, a strange, bewildered creature having kept the monster in a cave in a state of suspended animation ever since it was hit by lightning a few years back. You do not have to be told that the young "Frankenstein" brings the monster back to life and that it gets loose, causing numerous complications, including frightening us into a tantrum a couple of times.

Basil Rathbone as Frankenstein, Boris Karloff as the monster, Bela Lugosi as the hairy fright the monster obeys and Lionel Atwill as the police inspector of the village compose a cast well equipped to send chills up (or down) anybody's spine. They do here, all right. Mr. Rathbone and Mr. Atwill especially play all of this for all it is worth, and maybe more. And just looking at Mr. Karloff or Mr. Lugosi, or both, is enough to send you into the screaming meaning Josephine Hutchinson is on hand, too, but she does not scare anybody, being an exceedingly attractive note in the middle of this business. And young Donnie Dunagan is fine as the lad who innocently plays with the "giant" who comes strolling into his nursery.

The point wherein "Son of Frankenstein" seems to fall down a bit is its lack of action. There is suspense aplenty, all right, but sometimes it seems to have been gained at the expense of movement. Director Rowland V. Lee (who proved, incidentally, in "Love From a Stranger" that he could whip suspense around) has done a fine job of holding it in, but with a touch of that slow, plodding English manner at such things. It just gets tiresome sometimes, or maybe it is downright nerve racking to have a suspenseful moment stretched out until it pings an E above high C. Complaints or no complaints, however, "Son of Frankenstein" is guaranteed to scare you.

Right Remedy KANSAS CITY (AP).—Sheriff James L. Williams wants to keep his county jail prisoners' minds off card games and gossip. He asked for books today for the jail library—travel books.

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